

FACT SHEET

SEABIRD COLONY PROTECTION PROGRAM

PURPOSE AND NEED

Breeding seabird species, particularly those species that nest on cliffs or offshore rocks, are highly susceptible to human disturbances. The potential to harm or disturb breeding seabirds can come from various sources: popular coastal activities including kayaking, boating and coastal hiking; planes and helicopters; water-based ecotourism such as wildlife watching or diving; and fishing operations. When human disturbance events occur near seabird colonies, the birds can vacate their nests, leaving their eggs and chicks unprotected from predators and adverse weather conditions. In addition, eggs and chicks may be dislodged from the rocks or moved into areas where they may be attacked or killed. Repeated disturbance may result in total colony abandonment.

Currently, no coordinated management and conservation program for seabird colonies and roosting sites exists in California, while overlapping jurisdictions have made it difficult to adequately address human disturbance issues. Seabird restoration efforts have been underway for several years, but human disturbance has been a main factor impeding recovery at some colonies. An organized outreach and education program, focused on individuals who recreate and work along the coast, is the best way to boost these recovery efforts.

PROJECT GOAL

To improve the survival of California's seabird species by reducing human disturbances at their breeding and roosting colony sites from Point Sur to Point Reyes.



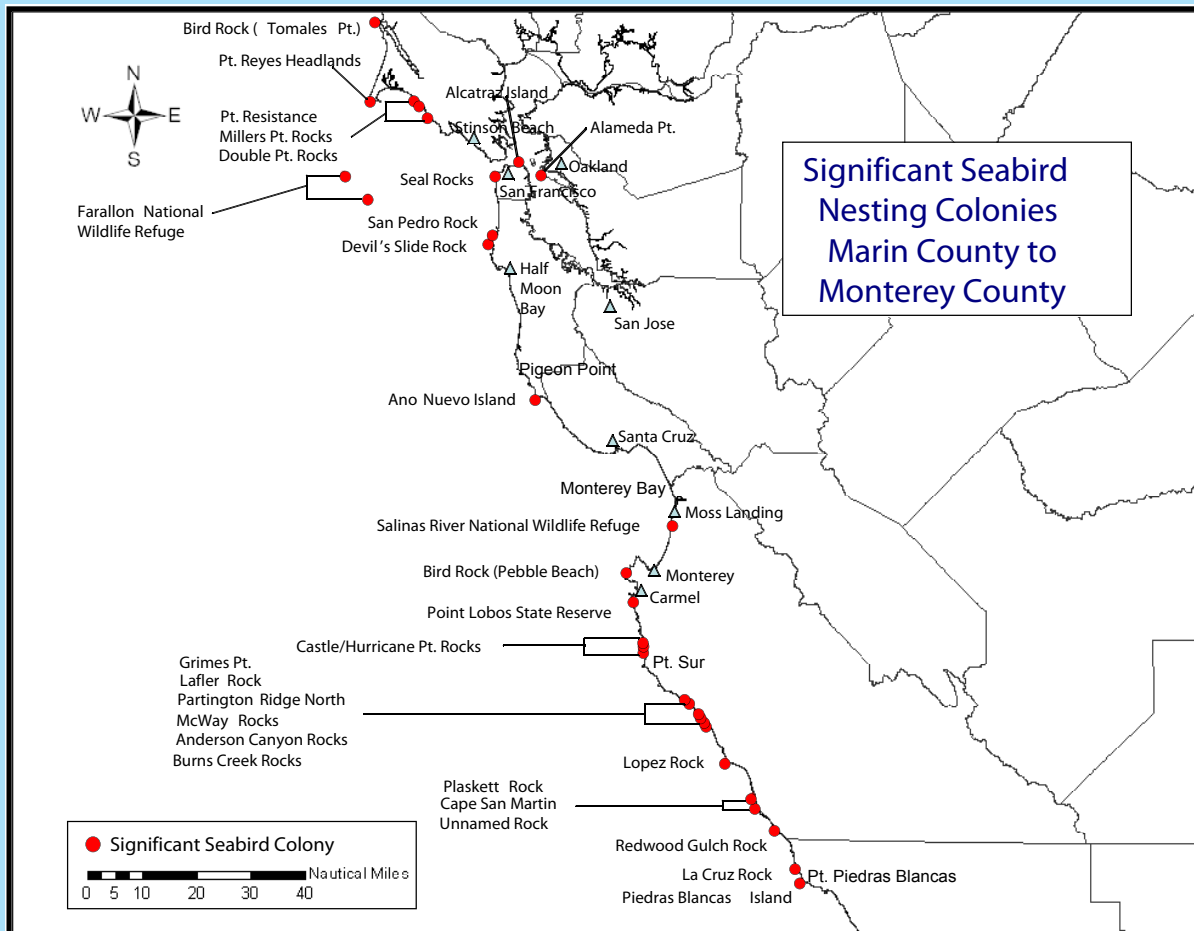
Photo: GFNMS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Seabird Colony Protection Program (SCPP) is funded by the Command Oil Spill Restoration Fund. The successful prosecution of the Command and the recovery of natural resource damages mark the first time a tanker vessel has been held accountable for illegally dumping oil in California. Common Murres, Marbled Murrelets and other seabirds were killed and many miles of beaches between Ano Nuevo and Pacifica were lightly oiled. An estimated 3,000 gallons of oil was spilled and oil sat offshore of the San Mateo County coast for approximately four days before any came ashore. Natural resource injuries included \$4,000,000 in estimated resource damages, as well as 1,490 Common Murres and other surface-nesting seabirds killed.

These damages spurred the formation of the Command Oil Spill Natural Resource Trust. The SCPP is overseen by the Trustees. Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (GFNMS) is taking a lead coordination role in implementing the SCPP in collaboration with NOAA Restoration Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other sanctuaries, agencies and organizations.

HOW CAN I HELP PROTECT SEABIRDS?



FOLLOW THESE RESPONSIBLE WILDLIFE VIEWING GUIDELINES:

- **Avoid getting too close to the colonies listed on this map.**
- **Be aware of the wildlife around you. Note the behavior of birds as you approach.**
- **Head bobbing, calling, and fluttering are all signs that you are too close.**



ADDITIONAL TIPS TO REMEMBER:

AIRCRAFT:

- Remain 2000 feet above coastal shoreline and islands. Avoid sudden changes in direction, altitude and speed. In designated marine sanctuary zones, it can be a violation to fly below 1000 feet.

BOATING:

- Watch and avoid seabird roosting, feeding, and nesting areas.
- Steer around groups of birds rather than through them.

FISHING:

- Do not chum if seabirds are nearby, and keep all food and bait covered.
- Do not throw fishing line into the water, and use barbless hooks or artificial lures when possible.

HIKING:

- Watch quietly, from a distance, and keep noise to a minimum, maintaining a viewing distance that does not disrupt birds.
- Do not feed or attempt to feed seabirds.